Hep C Hospitalizations and Related Costs Are On the Rise

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Hospitalizations because of hepatitis C virus (HCV) have steadily increased in recent years, posing a significant financial burden to the U.S. health care system. Publishing their findings in Health Affairs, researchers analyzed data covering 2004 to 2011 from the Nationwide Inpatient Sample, a large hospital inpatient care database that provides a nationally representative sample of U.S. hospitals, in order to monitor trends in rates and costs of hospitalization of adults with hep C or advanced liver disease.

The researchers estimated that the total charges incurred nationwide for hospitalizations in which hep C was the primary diagnosis grew from $900 million during 2004 to 2005 (when there were 20,963 hospitalizations at an average of $42,415 a piece) to $3.5 billion during 2010 to 2011 (when there were 64,867 hospitalizations at $53,626 a piece). This represents a 291 percent overall cost increase.

“Stakeholders and policy makers should implement both recommended screenings for people born in the period 1945 to 1965 and more effective treatment for hepatitis C, which have the potential to reverse the rising morbidity and costs of hepatitis C,” the authors advise.

To read the study abstract, click here.